

Why Do Rabbits Have Short Tails?

Story by Xu Guangyu

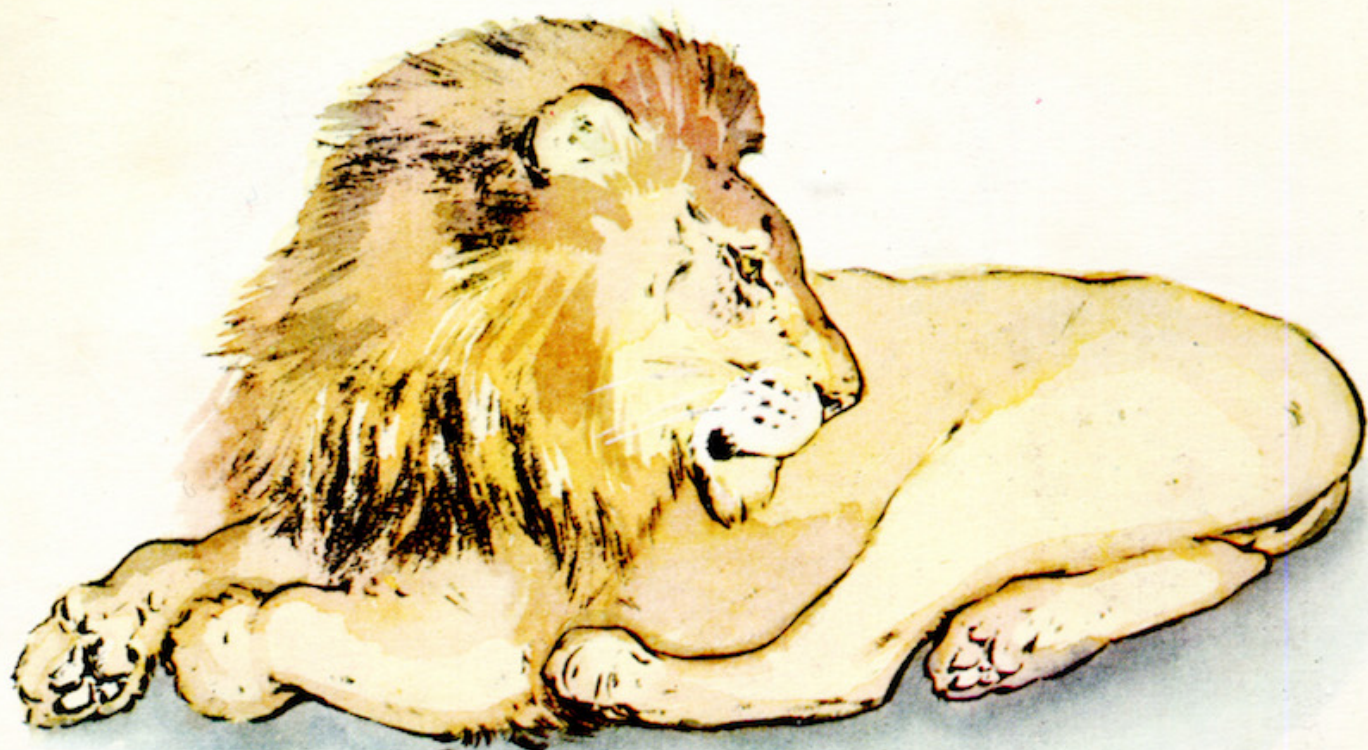
Illustrations by Liu Jiyou



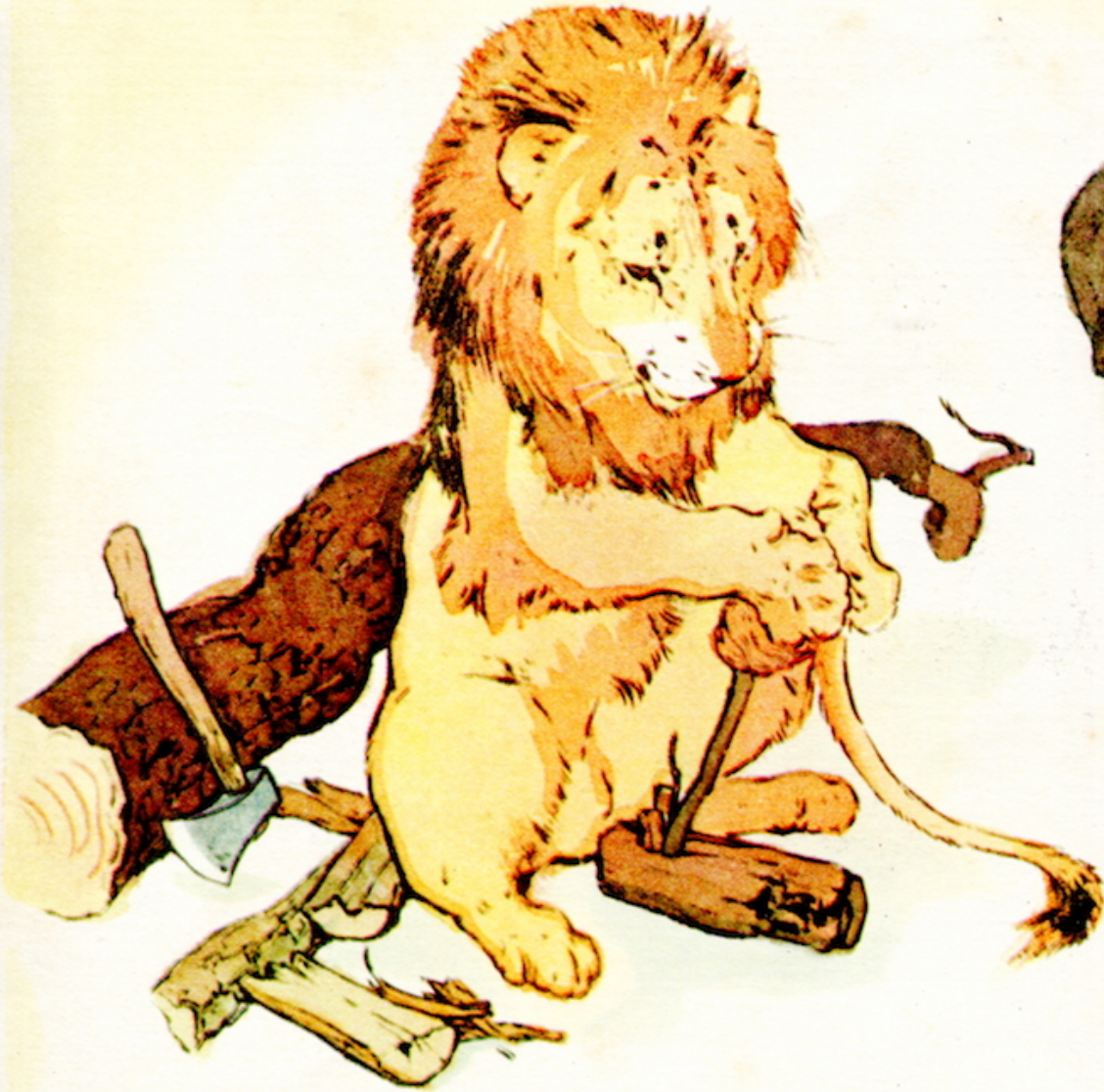
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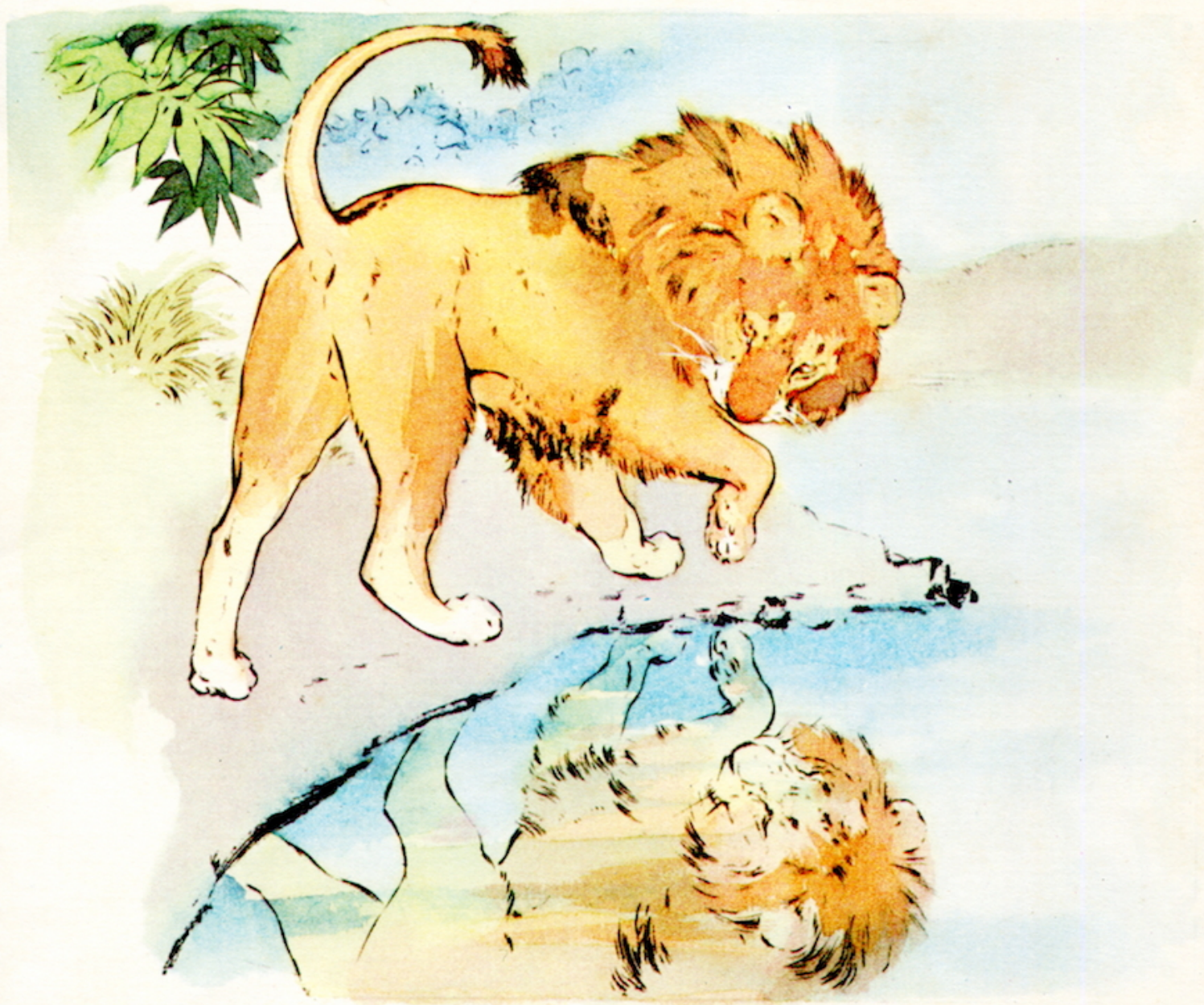
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A long time ago, no footed animals had tails. Even the Lion King was tailless.



One day, Lion King happened to make a wooden tail.



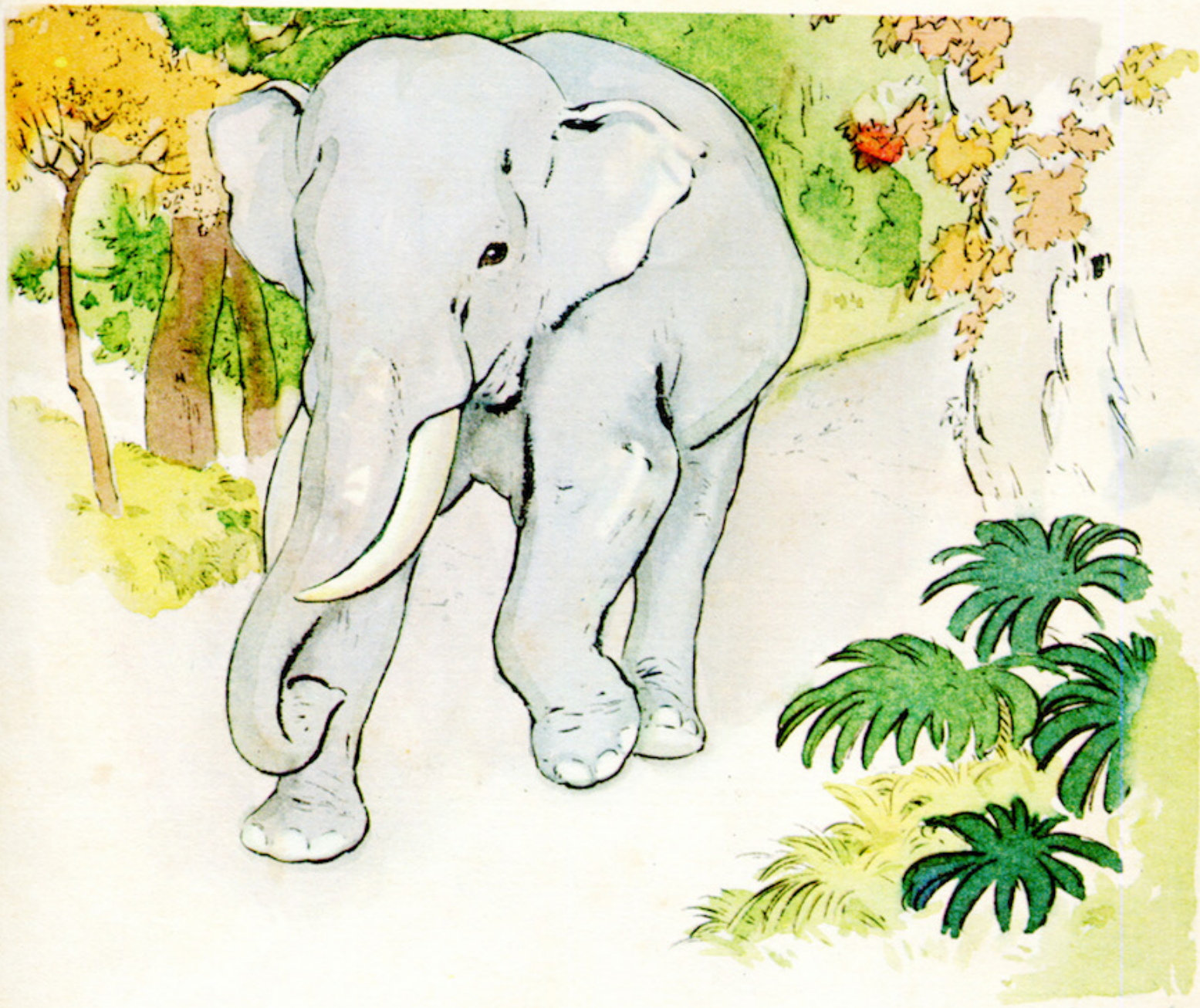
Putting the tail on his behind he went to see his reflection in the water and found that he was more handsome than ever.



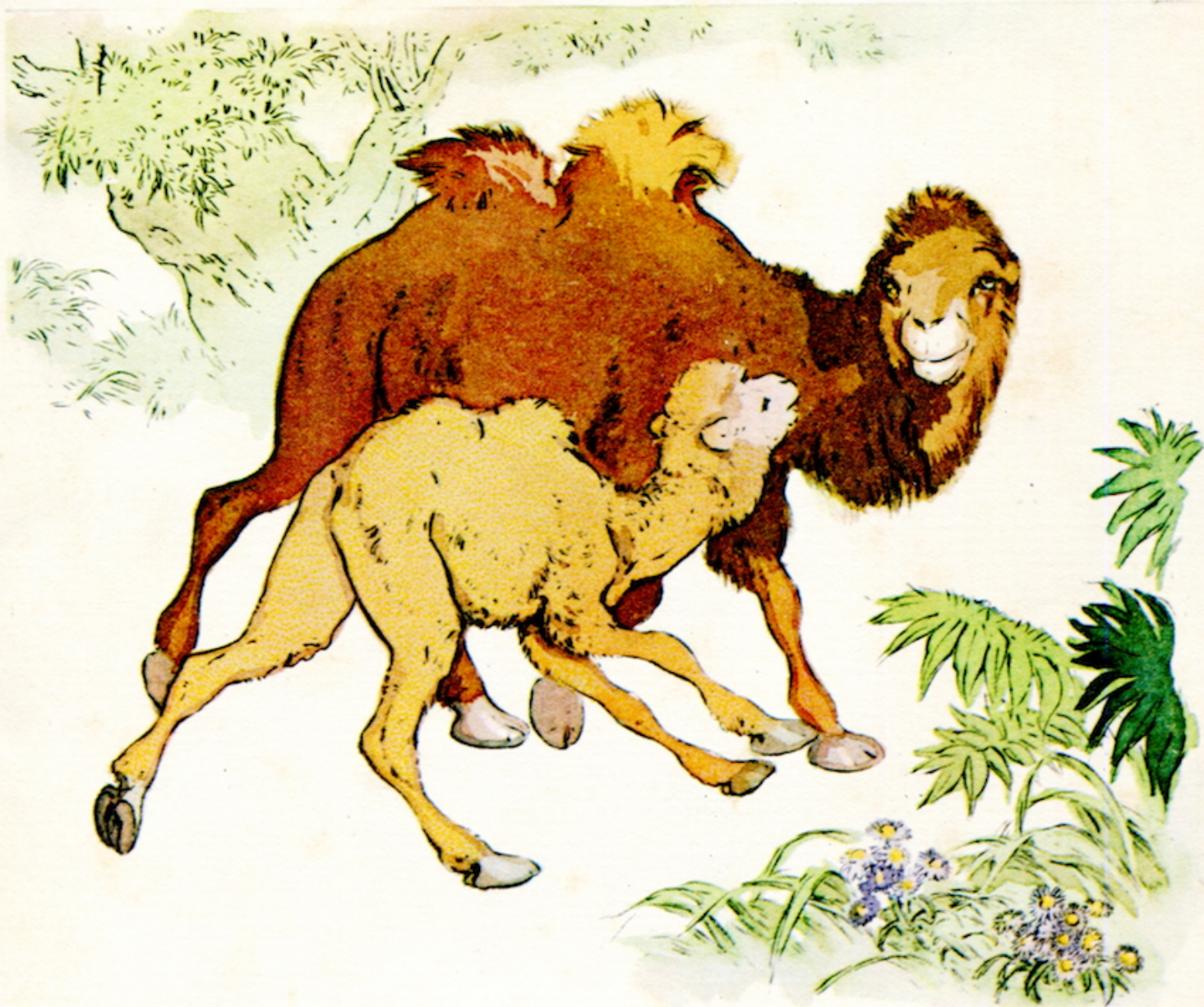
As Lion King was the only animal who had a tail he found himself rather lonely. "Why shouldn't other animals have tails too?" he thought. Then he asked two bears to make a great number of tails for him.



Placing the tails on the top of the mountain, Lion King sent a bear to summon all the other animals to come and get their tails the next day.



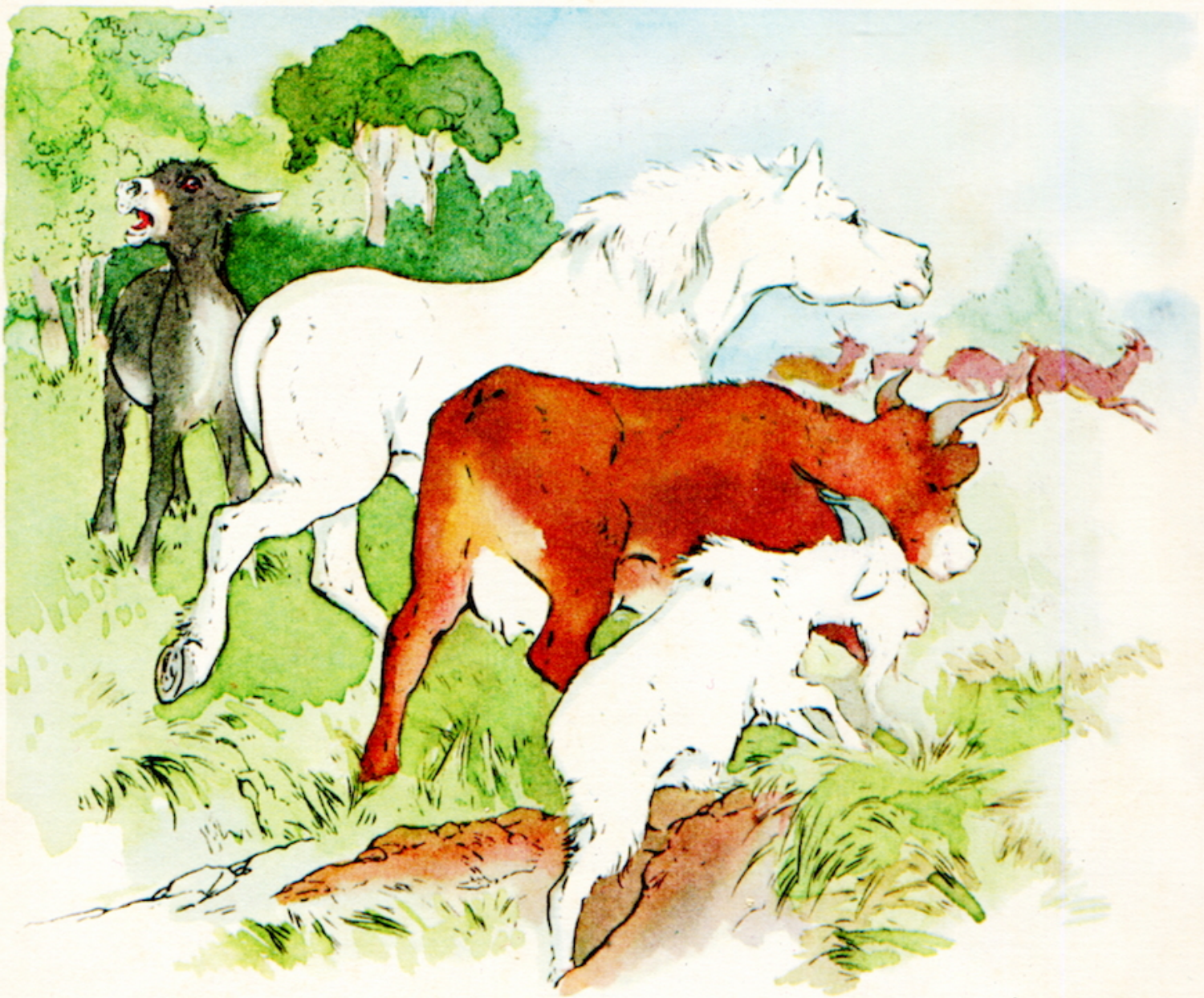
Next morning the first to set off was Elephant, swaying his long trunk as he went.



Then came the hump-back Camels, keeping each other company as they went to answer Lion King's call.



Jackal, Wolf, Tiger and Leopard also joined the train.



Horse, Ox and Sheep followed behind them.



Making his way along Monkey stopped and called out at Rabbit's gate to tell him about Lion King's command.



Rabbit darted out of his cave, wearing a white jacket.



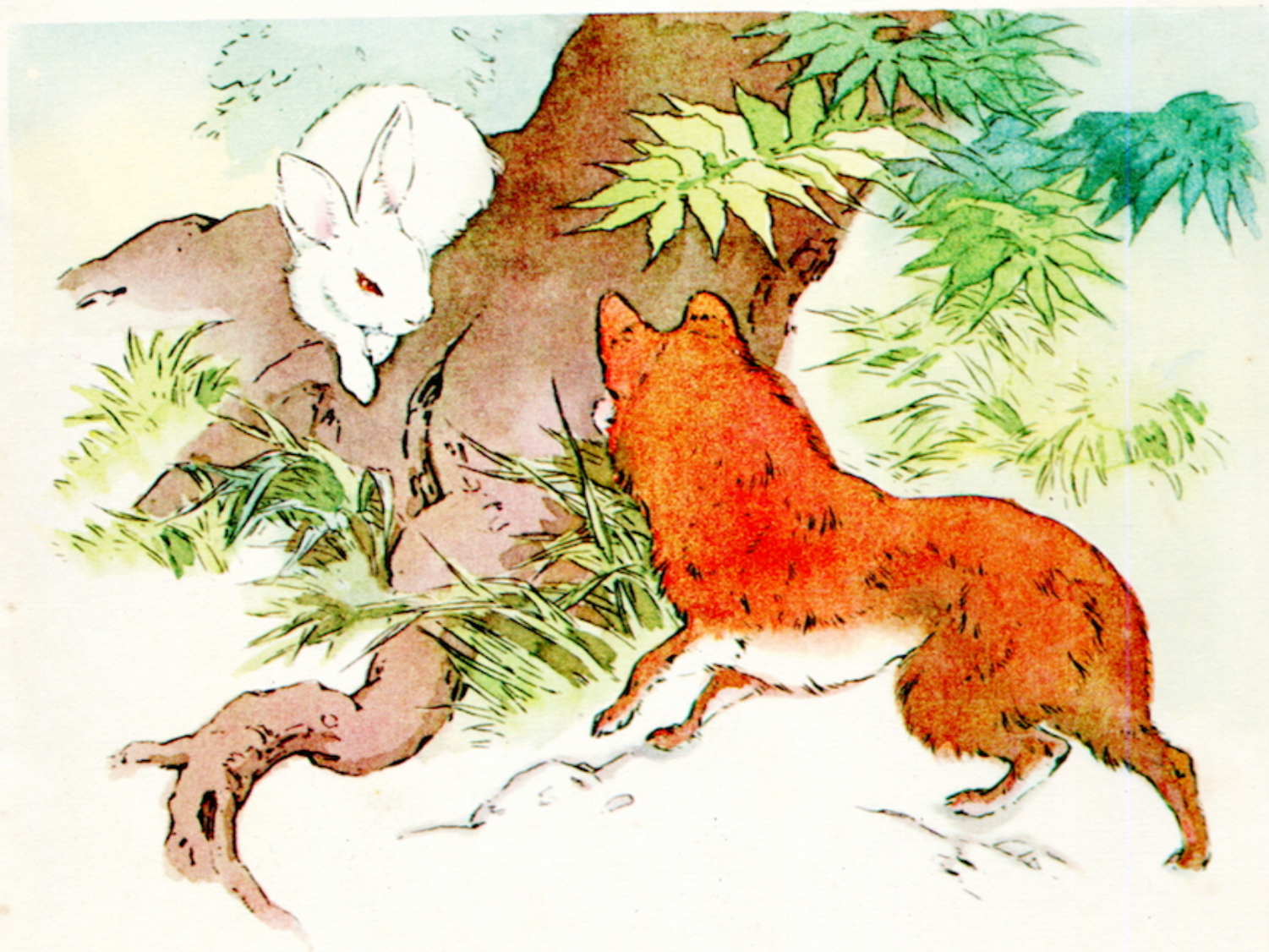
Unexpectedly Squirrel, who lived on a tree above Rabbit's cave jumped from branch to branch splattering dewdrops on Rabbit's ear.



Rabbit immediately made for his retreat as he was afraid that a pouring rain would drench his jacket.



But Rabbit wanted a tail very much, so he asked someone to get it for him.



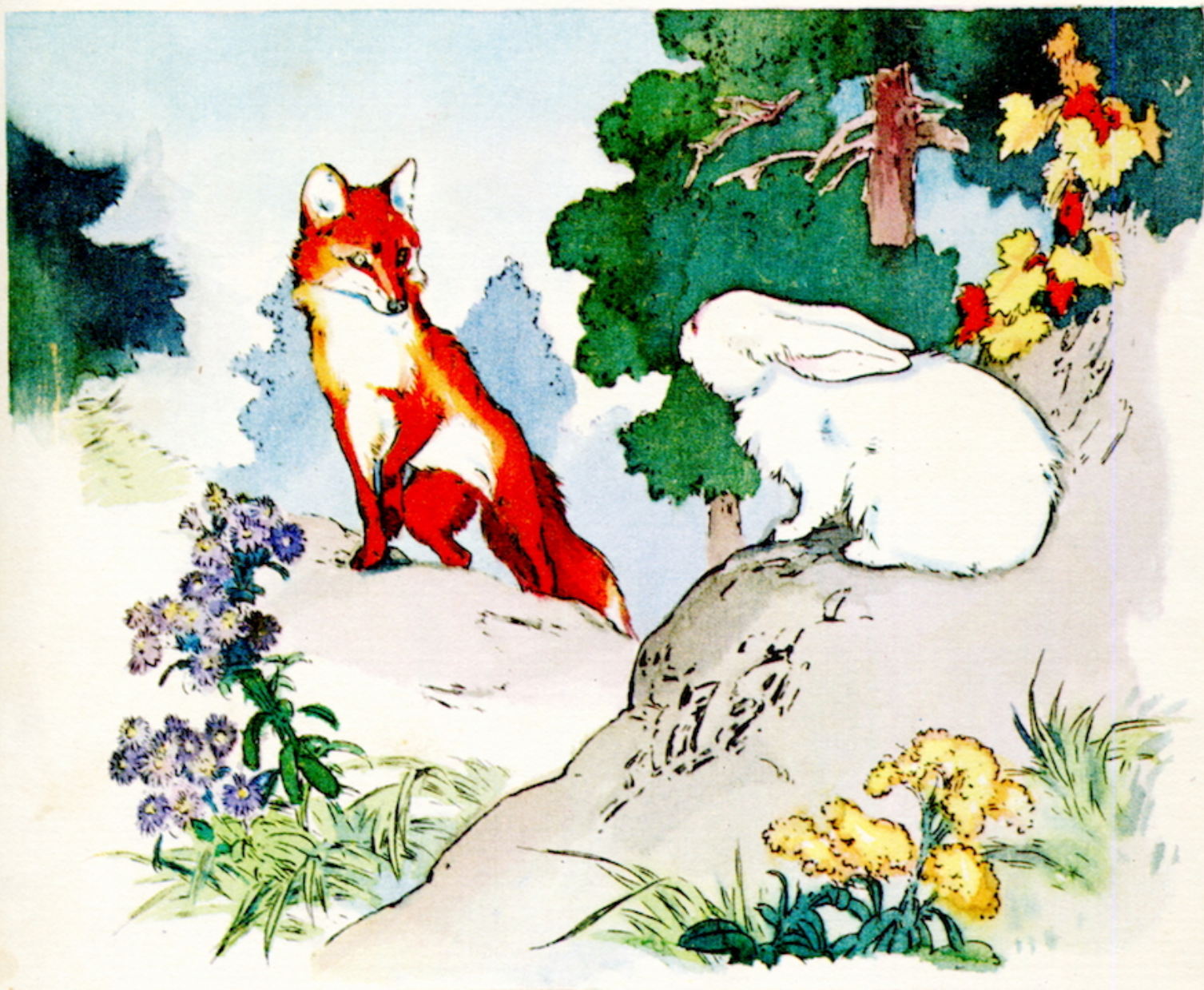
Seeing Fox, Rabbit pleaded: "Sister Fox, would you be so kind as to get a tail for me?" Fox agreed.



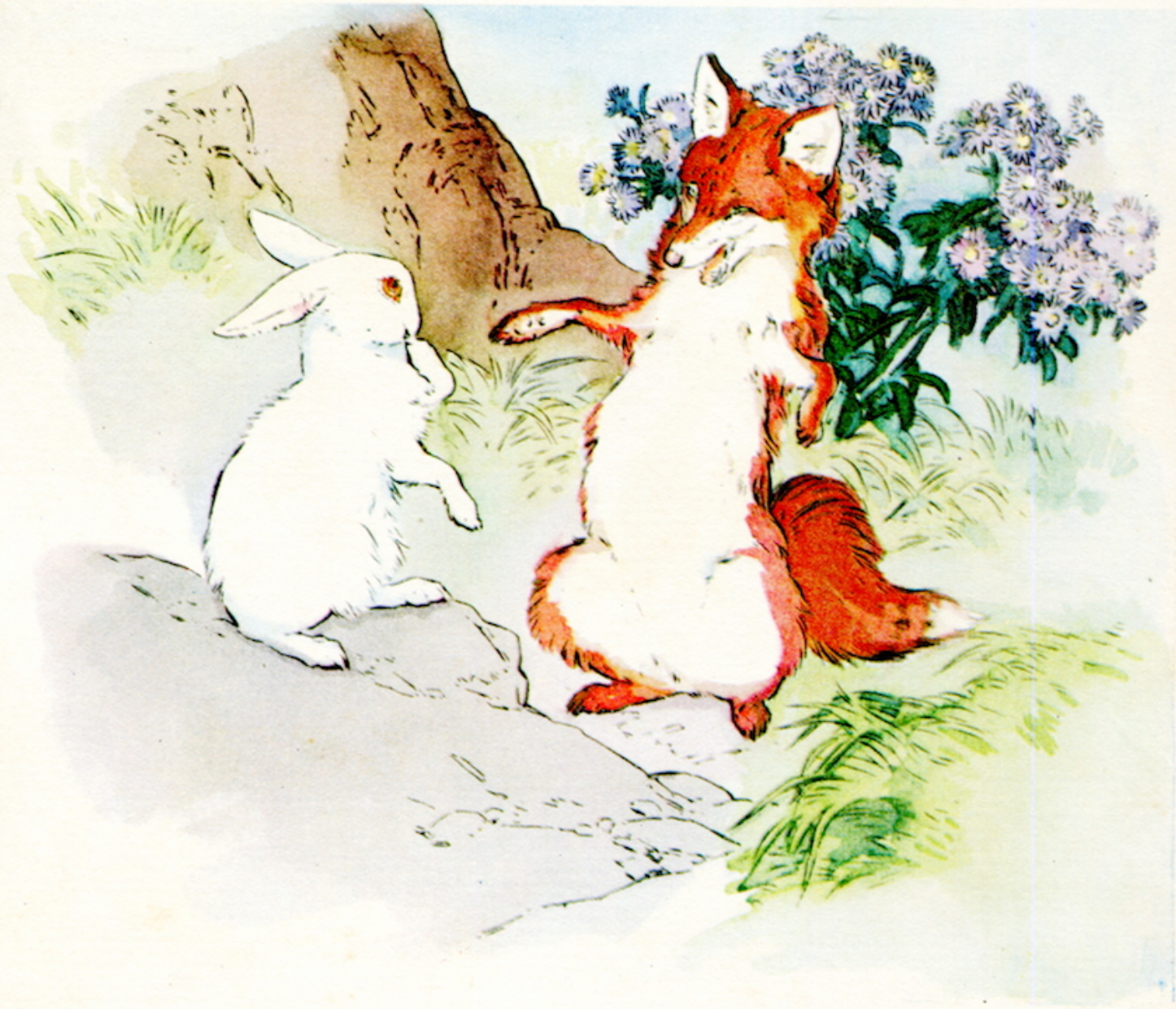
Knowing that Fox's words were unreliable, Rabbit then asked Pig to bring him a tail instead.



Rabbit waited at his cave. He heard the happy laughter of Elephant, Camels, and Jackal. They were all jumping with joy, each on his way home with a tail.



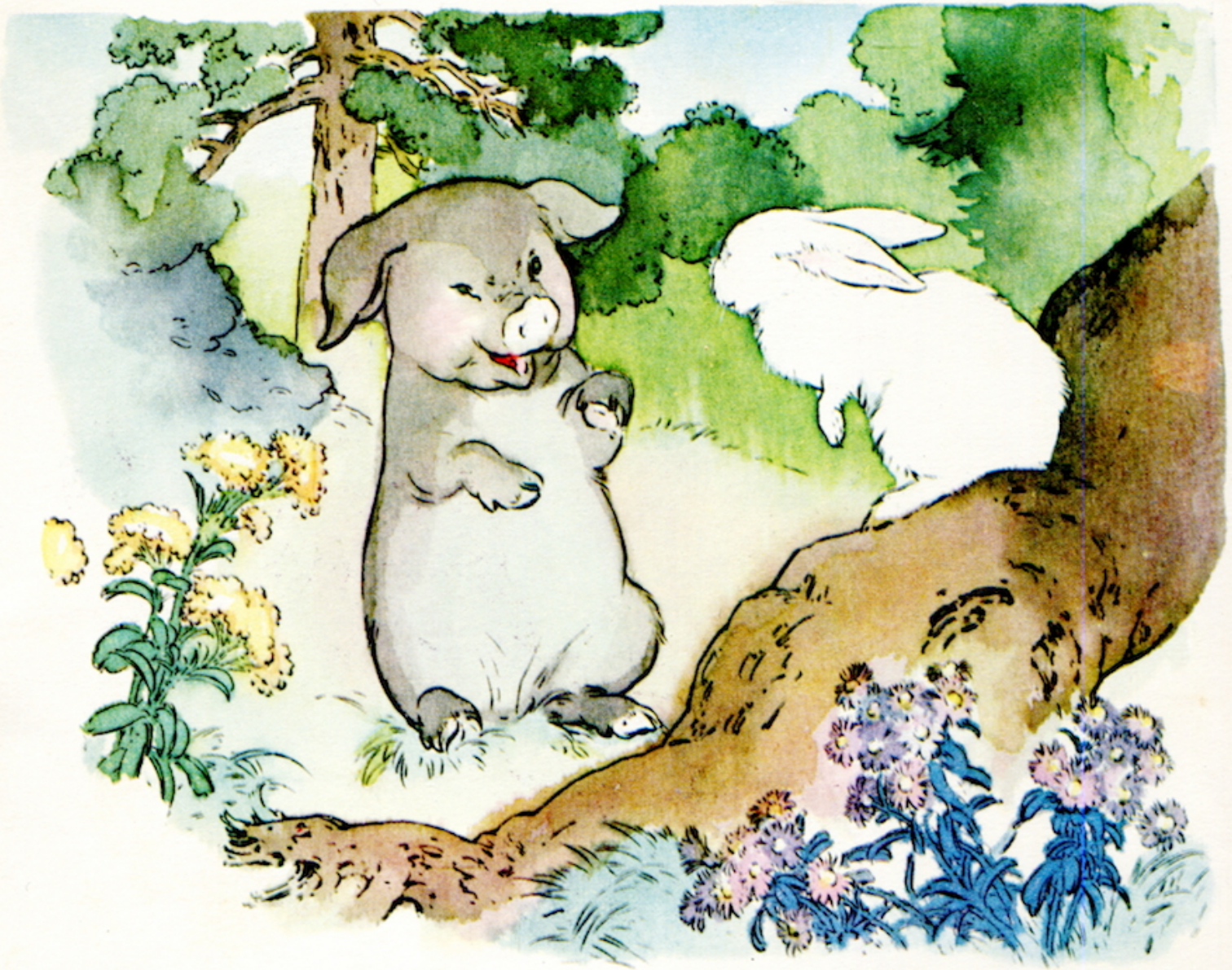
Rabbit waited anxiously for Fox's return. The moment he saw Fox he asked: "Sister Fox, have you got a tail for me?"



“Why, I’m really sorry. As I was asked to express thanks on behalf of everybody I forgot to ask for it.” Fox lied. “Since Lion King doesn’t have an extra one, what is to be done?”



Rabbit thought to himself: "Luckily, I have also asked Pig to get a tail for me." When he spotted Pig swinging back with a tail on his behind and making his way towards him, Rabbit greeted him and asked excitedly: "Brother Pig, I'm sure you must have a tail for me."



“No, I’m sorry, I’m to blame,” Pig said, crest-fallen. “Lying on the mountain top, I dozed off. When I woke up Lion King just gave me this small ugly tail. I was annoyed and forget all about you.”



Rabbit was heartbroken. Back in his cave, he burst into tears.



Soon familiar sounds outside his cave drew him out again. He found that Dog and Cat were engaged in a big fight over who had the best tail.



The row between them became more heated. Cat stuck up her tail and meowed furiously while Dog bow-wow'd ferociously. Pouncing on Cat, Dog chewed part of her tail off.



At the sight of the broken tail on the ground Rabbit jumped at it and scampered back with the broken tail in his mouth.



Back in his cave Rabbit put Cat's tail on his behind. That's how Rabbit got his tail, though it's short and funny to look at.